

Springfield, PA — Today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7), participated in Delaware County Down Syndrome Interest Group’s 17th Annual “Walk for Our Kids” at the Springfield Mall to support children with Down syndrome and his support for education for all and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

“People with developmental disabilities should be measured by what they can do, not by what they can’t,” noted Joe. “I applaud the Delaware County Down Syndrome Interest Group for working to make that a reality every day.”

Down syndrome is a common genetic variation, which usually causes delay in physical, intellectual and language development. While the exact cause is unknown, we do know it is not related to race, nationality, or socio-economic status. The incidence of Down syndrome in the United States is estimated to be 1 in every 800-1000 births. Approximately, 250,000 families in the United States are currently affected by Down syndrome. Most importantly, studies show that children with Down syndrome benefit from early intervention, appropriate medical care, and inclusive education.

In Congress, Congressman Sestak is a member of the Education and Labor Committee, where he has advocated for a high quality education for all students. He recently held two education summits to provide an opportunity for education stakeholders in the 7th Congressional district to discuss key educational issues with policy makers and education experts. The first summit, led by the Honorable George Miller, Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, and the Honorable Terrell Halaska, Assistant Secretary of Education, consisted of panel discussions on Special Education. The second summit explored the challenges facing our Higher Education system and Advanced Training programs and included Congressman Rubén Hinojosa, the Chairman of the US House Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness as a guest panelist. Congressman Sestak has also signed on as a major sponsor of H.R. 627, the Keep our PACT Act, which would fully-fund No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by 2014.

“According to the U.S. Department of Education, nearly 6 million of our schoolchildren receive special education,” added Joe. “I strongly support providing the resources necessary to ensure that all children, regardless of their disability, receive a high quality education.”

"Walk for Our Kids" is the groups main fundraiser of the year. Funds raised are used to provide resource books, literature and to support new families of children with Down Syndrome. The Delaware County Down Syndrome Interest Group also provides scholarships for families to attend conferences and seminars on Down Syndrome and other disability related issues and for children to attend camps, swimming lessons, music lessons and other social activities.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. □ According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.*

###